



May 18, 2021

Amnesty International USA urges a vote “YES” for the COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act (H.R.1843)

Dear Representative:

On behalf of Amnesty International USA, we urge you to vote YES on the **COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act (H.R.1843)**, sponsored by Rep. Meng and passed in the Senate on April 22.

The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act addresses the surge in violence against Asian American and Pacific Islander (“AAPI”) communities by assigning a point person at the Justice Department (“DOJ”) to expeditiously review hate crimes reported to law enforcement. The bill also provides resources for AAPI communities to come together and fight intolerance and hate.

We have seen the horrifying consequences of racist and demonizing language in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic as AAPI individuals have been assaulted, beaten, bullied, and harassed since the onset of the pandemic. Since March 2020, there have been nearly 4,000 reported incidents of discrimination and physical, verbal, and online attacks against AAPI individuals, including against AAPI health workers.

The COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act focuses specifically on the rise in AAPI hate crimes during the pandemic and directs DOJ to:

- Designate a DOJ employee to assist with expedited review of COVID-19 hate crimes reported to federal, state, and/or local law enforcement agencies;
- Provide guidance for state and local law enforcement agencies to:
 - establish online reporting of hate crimes or incidents, and to have online reporting available in multiple languages;
 - expand culturally competent and linguistically appropriate public education campaigns, and collection of data and public reporting of hate crimes; and
- Issue guidance detailing best practices to mitigate racially discriminatory language in describing the COVID–19 pandemic, in coordination with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, the COVID–19 Health Equity Task Force and community-based organizations.

We appreciate, in particular, the linguistically accessible outreach and reporting provisions in the bill. Passage of the **COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act (H.R.1843)** is a critical step to ensure the U.S. justice system has the people and resources to effectively account for and mitigate anti-Asian hate crimes. We strongly urge you to vote “YES” on H.R.1843.

For more information, please contact Joanne Lin 202/281-0017 or jlin@aiusa.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joanne Lin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Joanne" and the last name "Lin" clearly distinguishable.

Joanne Lin
National Director
Advocacy and Government Affairs